

AMUSEMENTS.

The mid-September week has been a notable one in Omaha theater-going circles. The Creighton has opened its regular season with an attraction first in point of time on a list of bookings sufficiently extraordinary to make any season notable; and Mr. Frohman's ever welcome players from the Empire theater, in New York, have paid one of those annual visits which make the year seem long before they come again. At Boyd's a week infirmly begun was rounded out with some very acceptable presentations of well-known and still favorite light opera, "The Bohemian Girl," "The Mikado" and "The Chimes of Normandy" were performed apparently satisfactorily to the large audiences present. There is still a large and respectable contingent in every community of people who would rather hear Halse's harmless opera for the twentieth time than all your "Little Troopers" and "Caliphs for the first and a repertory such as that offered by the Schiller company appeals strongly to them. If they are very old "The Bohemian Girl" is calculated to renew their youth; if younger, "The Mikado" may have that result; and "The Chimes" will easily take them back a dozen years. All these operas were lavishly put on the stage, the costumes were more rich and correct in design and the people in the company averaged fairly competent after their kind. The chorus especially was perfectly strong and decidedly effective in point of volume of sound. Half of it was composed of conspicuously well favored girls who furnished as many living proofs that Mr. David Henderson's discrimination in such matters has not lost its keen edge, although, doubtless from the exigencies of the work presented, they did not show that airy freedom from the restraint of skirts which has been characteristic of Mr. Henderson's productions hitherto. The principals were fairly effective as a rule and it was a distinct pleasure to hear and see once more the fine voice and distinguished presence of John E. McWade, who is fairly entitled by merit and longevity of service to be numbered among light opera veterans.

It is a fact not generally known to students of the history of music and should be a source of pride to citizens of Nebraska, that the first production of "The Mikado" in America took place at Hastings in this state. If one investigates the seeming incongruity of preferring the western prairie town to New York, the conviction is readily brought home that it was not a matter of preference. Messrs. Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyley Carte did not select Hastings out of America's great cities for the purpose of exploiting their new work; the Hastings affair was undoubtedly the result of piracy—that dreadful trade which the authors had treated in an earlier opera. The manner of it was this: "The Mikado" was first put on in London, one H. S. Fairchild, operating in some occult manner in that city, acquired a number of scores of the opera. How he compassed it was never rightly understood. There are several ways, more or less shady, by which he may have come to it. At all events, he was in possession of one fine day with the manuscript in his trunk, and finding there abundant material ready to his hand, in the shape of a well-trained mixed chorus and a number of singers who had had some experience on the stage in former presentations of light opera, he and his wife, together with the principal actors, set out for Hastings, where, a few weeks later, performed "The Mikado," some time before it was presented to a New York audience. The cast included as principals many people who were then and are still prominent in Hastings society; and in the choruses were included some voices which have since been heard by far greater and more cultivated audiences than that which witnessed that ambitious attempt. Fairchild and his wife were Nanki Poo and Yum Yum respectively; Alex Murray was the Ko-Ko, M. L. Averill the Pooh Bah, Charles Work the Fish Tink and Jay Cherry the Mikado. The Pitti Sing was Laura Dilley, the Mikado's Minister, and Addie Renfrew was the Katisha. The scheme was its accomplishment were not extensively advertised, for prudential reasons, and every one connected with it was liable to the penalty of the heinous crime of piracy. It is hoped, however, that in twelve years the statute of limitations has expired out their legal liability and that Heaven has pardoned their sins, among which, it is said, the recording angel has not numbered a poor performance of "The Mikado."

The Bee's acknowledgments and thanks to Mr. Fairchild for his new theatrical guide, although fairly, are no less sincere. The work, to employ a useful phrase, fills a long-felt want, and by its complete and interesting information in the field which it covers, must be invaluable to the business manager, the press agent and the newspaper critic.

The Frohman engagement at the Creighton was, as its annual recurrence always is, an artistic treat and uplift. The appearance of so admirable a company of players is always an event of importance, particularly in sections of the country to which such organizations penetrate but seldom. Whatever they do is excellently well done; and that in itself, whether or not the thing done is intrinsically worth the effort expended on it, is very much. One of the plays they brought here was of the slightest possible value; but that has already been sufficiently discussed. The other new piece, with which they took their present leave of Omaha, was not commented upon at length at the time. "The Benefit of the Doubt" is a far specimen of a class of plays which many well-wishers of the stage would be glad to see the last of. It is of the "problem play" type. That the "problem" in most cases concerns the perverted and unlawful relation of the sexes, and that the foremost playwrights of two continents are devoting their best energies to such discussions are problems which will sooner or later call for solution. It would be interesting to read a play by Ibsen in which the effect of a systematic course of such dramas upon young girls should be treated as a problem. There could be no better answer to such a "sum in arithmetic" as that.

By the death of James Lewis the American stage sustains a loss which no one now before the public is likely fully to repair. Omaha theater-goers will recall his last appearance here in May, as Grumio in "The Taming of the Shrew," and will remember, at least those of them will remember who knew him well, how pleasant it was to find that time had not withered him nor custom staled his infinite variety. He was always withered, at least he appeared so, and had for years. The best characterization of his method was that made by the critic who said he was "so dry he crackles." He was modest regarding his own merits, and suffered himself to be tied down by the management under which he spent his best years to a single line of drama, while others, with infinitely less ability, reaped larger fame and greater fortune as stars. No breath of scandal ever touched his public or private reputation; he never resorted to other than legitimate means to advance his professional interests; and his way of life was so regular and smooth that he seemed fit for many more years of usefulness. His end came almost without warning, and he was carried to his last resting place by his former friends and associates, all of them famous, but none more fully beloved than he.

Mr. Otis Thayer's Gaspard in "The Chimes of Normandy" is a very artistic impersonation of the crabbed and malignant old miser. With every temptation to overact, to which most Gaspards incontinently succumb, Mr. Thayer invests the part with considerable tragic force, and, at least toward the close, with a certain dignity not often seen in it. This commendation is the more freely bestowed that some of Mr. Thayer's other work, as shown during the present engagement, has not exhibited in an equal degree the careful preparation and the respect for the author's lines which even stage buffoonery may show.

Popular operas, ably interpreted by a competent company of principals, supported by a chorus of shapely and well-voiced singers, are among the attractive features which it is said are embodied in the per-

formances presented by the Columbia Opera company, which will commence a week's engagement at the Creighton tonight with an elaborate production of Richard Stahl's comic opera success, "Said Pasha," made doubly attractive by brilliant costumes and elaborate scenic effects. "Said Pasha" will also be the bill for tomorrow night, to be followed Tuesday night by "The Black Hussar." The program for Wednesday matinee and night will be Gilbert and Sullivan's tuneful "Mikado," which never fails of a cordial reception. The manager is announced as the drawing card for Thursday, "Erminie" will be the Friday offering, the engagement closing with two performances Saturday of "H. M. S. Pinafore," when Admiral Porter's bevy of feminine relatives will again be introduced to an Omaha audience. The management promises that the various operas in the repertoire shall be presented in a most attractive manner, and if the comments which have been received concerning this organization can be accepted as a criterion, there should be every prospect of an ample fulfillment of that promise, as the company has succeeded in pleasing Denver audiences during a season of five weeks. Among the principal artists: Kitty Marcellus, Vivian Rosseter, Mme. Freda Bailey, Grace Bell, Fr. Emma Lyster, Charles E. Huntington, George Kunkel, Jack Henderson, Edwin Scott and other clever actors and actresses. Matinees will be given Wednesday and Saturday.

"In Old Kentucky," which comes to the Boyd for three nights, commencing with a performance this evening, stands at the head of last season's successes. It was put on at the Academy of Music, New York, two years ago, for a short engagement, but it took such a firm hold upon the public that it ran through the season to crowded houses. No play produced in years greater financial returns. It is an elaborate scenic production, and it possesses a story of absorbing interest. An old feature is a pickaninny band, composed of about twenty little darkeys. These diminutive negroes were secured in the south and trained by the management, especially for "In Old Kentucky." In New York they were considered a decided novelty. A genuine horse race is also an attractive feature of the performance, and the manner in which it is handled on the stage, excites the most enthusiastic comment. The play is a picture of Kentucky life. It opens amid bold, picturesque and romantic scenes in Kentucky, the home of the heroine being located by the side of a yawning ravine, crossed by means of a bridge, raised or lowered at will. Here Frank Layson meets Madge Brierly, and mutual love following, the jealousy of Joe Lorey, a "moonshiner," is aroused. He attempts to kill his rival after knocking him senseless by a dynamite cartridge, but his better instincts prevailing he stamps on the fuse and goes away. The villain of the piece, Lem Lindsay, formerly a moonshiner and other cleverly the murderer, in fact, of the father of both Madge and Joe, had a grudge against Layson, and relights the fuse. The bridge had been previously rendered useless by Lorey, but Madge coming to the door, stands appalled on the brink of the chasm at the impending fate of her lover, but recovering her senses, she dashes at a run, and herself over the abyss, rushes for the cartridge and flings it down the ravine, where it explodes with terrific effect.

In the second act Layson again temporarily succeeds in firing the stable in which Layson's race horse is kept, but the animal is rescued in the nick of time by the jockey, who fearlessly dashes into the burning building. Later the jockey is made drunk, and if the horse doesn't run and win, Layson is ruined. Madge again comes to the rescue, and donning jockey's attire in the third act, rides a desperate race, and winning, once again upsets Lindsay's plans. In the fourth act Joe Lorey discovers the identity of Lindsay and kills him, and there is a happy ending. There is a generous, breezy, good-natured clown, a faithful old negro servant, a strong, manly moonshiner and other cleverly drawn characters. Madge, the heroine, is a pretty mountain girl, who talks and acts naturally, and who is altogether a very delightful young person.

"In Old Kentucky" comes with the prestige of a great success, won in every city where the play has been given.

Chauncey Alcott is announced for a four night engagement at the Creighton, commencing Sunday, September 27. He is a man who will present his successful Irish plays, "Mavourneen," "The Minstrel of Clare," and "The Irish Artist," in which productions he has achieved a uniform success throughout the country. In the role of Morris Cronin, the Irish artist, Mr. Alcott is said to give a most refined interpretation of Irish comedy of the better class. The character, it is said, is portrayed in a manner so natural as to place the character on a plane above the ordinary. Combined with his histrionic abilities, Mr. Alcott is the possessor of a tenor voice of rare capabilities and his rendition of several songs has been the means of making those melodies popular. The characters in the plays are in the hands of competent players. The costumes have been attended to with reference to historical correctness, and the scenery used is promised to be not only appropriate but a triumph of the scenic artist's skill.

The elaborate attention to details which is characteristic of the stage productions of Richard Mansfield assures a scale of magnificence to his coming week's engagement at the Creighton, such as is rarely attempted in the world of things theatrical. Supported by a company of players of that degree of artistic ability which we have come to expect of Mr. Mansfield's companies, he will during his engagement here revive a number of productions in which he has become famous in the past, as well as appearing in characters in which he is new to the local stage. During the week, commencing Monday, October 5, this great player will present that which might be aptly termed "a dramatic festival," bringing a company of unusual size (seventy-two people) direct from New York City. He will present during his stay "The Merchant of Venice," "The Scarlet Letter," "A Parisian Romance," "King Richard III," "Beau Brummell," "Prince Karl" and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." An engagement of this importance has already brought many requests for seats from out of town patrons, but the management announces that no seats will be reserved prior to the opening of the sale Saturday, October 2, at 9 o'clock a. m. The probabilities are that large theater parties will attend from adjacent cities during the engagement.

Captured a Wife Murderer.
PORTLAND, Ore., Sept. 19.—Detective F. L. Loose of New Orleans passed through here, coming from the Cote d'Alene country, having in charge Mill Levy, a young man belonging to one of the first families in the Crescent City, where he is wanted on charges of murdering his young and beautiful wife and of committing forgeries aggregating \$50,000. The officer had been on Levy's track since the latter part of July, tracing him from point to point till last Monday, when he located him about twenty miles from Murray, working with some prospectors, who were ignorant of his antecedents.

Lynched for Killing a Fellow Citizen.
KANSAS CITY, Sept. 19.—A special to the Star from Perry, Okla., says: It is reported but not verified, that Elmer Cox, a prominent horseman, was lynched at Pawnee, Okla., late last night for killing L. D. Crawford. Crawford was one of the best known men in the county and superintendent of the Christian Sunday school. The men quarreled over Cox's wife Crawford asserting she did not conduct herself becomingly. Cox struck him over the head with a scappling. The injured man died Tuesday, and all day yesterday Pawnee was crowded with an excited mob.

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